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20th CONGRESS,
1st Session.

[Doc. No. 139.]

HO. OF REPS.

SETTLEMENT ON THE OREGON RIVER.

MEMORIAL

OF

CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES,

PRAYING FOR A GRANT OF LAND,

And the aid of Government

IN FORMING A COLONY

ON THE

NORTHWEST COAST OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 11, 1828.

Read, and referred to the Committee of the Whole House, to which is committed
the *Bill* [No. 12,] to authorize the occupation of the Oregon river.

WASHINGTON :

PRINTED BY GALES & SEATON.

1828.

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To the honorable the Senate and the House of Representatives in Congress assembled.

Your memorialists, citizens of the United States, who are mostly engaged in agricultural and mechanical pursuits, have long and seriously reflected on the subject of colonizing a part of the American territory bordering on the Pacific Ocean, and believe it of great importance for the security of our rights and property on the North-West Coast, and for the peace and subordination of the Indians on our western frontiers. They are convinced, if that territory should be settled by colonists animated by the *spirit* of those civil and religious institutions, which constitutes the living source of our national prosperity, and which dignifies the character, and elevates the pursuits of any people, the happiest consequences must result to our country in particular, and to the rest of mankind. They conceive that so just and precautionary a measure, on the part of Congress, might prevent an immediate inundation of that territory by an European emigration; for, if it should be overflowed by an ignorant and corrupt population, it would be calamitous and distressing to the republics in both Americas. The demoralizing influence of such a population would retard the growth, if not destroy the germ, of a free government.

Its salubrity of climate, its fertility of soil, its peculiar facilities and local advantages for commerce with the trading world, its commodious harbors for the safety and convenience of the navigating interests, its grand river Oregon, diversifying and watering by its thousand streams a wide-spread and beautiful country, its probable abundant productions, and more probable growth in population, have already excited the envy of some, and the admiration of all civilized nations, and will be found to contribute greatly to the resources of the wealth and power of the republic. It is also believed, that a permanent settlement of that country would render our Indian trade safer and more profitable; would give a specific value to millions of property now valueless to Government, and would conduct the streams of commerce, on that part of the globe, through their proper channels, into the reservoir of our national finance. That, while the rights and interests of every individual member of the republic would be respected, commerce and manufactures would be supported, laudable enterprise and industry encouraged, and all things conspire more harmoniously to the prosperity and happiness of our country. That science, the refined principles of a republican government, and Christianity, would unite their meliorating influence in diffusing light and peace over Western America, the East Indies, and the islands in the sea.

Your memorialists, believing that the time has fully come when it is the wisdom and policy of Congress to open this western wilderness to the skilful and persevering industry of civilized man, are desirous of devoting all their future efforts to this great object, and to testify the purity of their intentions by cherishing the interests of a Colony planted under the auspices of Government: they, therefore, would respectfully ask for such extent of territory, and such rights, immunities, and support, as may render them a respectable, peaceful, and prosperous branch of the republic. They think it desirable that Congress grant a right of jurisdiction over the territory which lies between the parallels of latitude forty-six and forty-nine degrees, north, and is bounded, on the west, by the Pacific Ocean, or the western limit of the United States' claim; and on the east by a degree of longitude, which intersects the Oregon river, one hundred miles from some fixed point at its mouth: that they grant a right, in fee simple, of so much of said territory as may be deemed adequate to the prosecution of the objects and pursuits of the colony: that they open one or more ports of entry, and fortify the same: that they extinguish the Indian title, to a part or the whole of said territory: and that they furnish transports and other means of conveying the settlers and their effects to that country.

Your memorialists will ever consider it their chief happiness to be the devoted subjects of the American republic, and to enjoy the benefits of its protection. They will cheerfully submit to any condition which Congress may be pleased to impose, and to all the hardships and sacrifices incidental to the accomplishment of their important design. They, for themselves, and three thousand others who will associate in solemn covenant with them, ask for the aforesaid country, to possess and enjoy it, as a rich inheritance, and engage sacredly to preserve it for posterity in its brightest lustre. As in duty bound will ever pray.